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SUBJECT: NORTHERN UGANDA NOTES (AUGUST 25 - SEPTEMBER 7, 2007)

11. (U) Summary: The following Northern Uganda Notes provides information on the situation on the ground and USG activities aimed at meeting Mission's objectives in northern Uganda. These objectives include promoting regional stability through peace and security, good governance, access to social services, economic growth, and humanitarian assistance. Post appreciates feedback from consumers on the utility of this product and any gaps in information that need to be filled. End Summary.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

12. (SBU) As part of his ongoing efforts to help advance the peace process, U.N. Special Envoy for LRA Affected Areas Joachim Chissano met with President Francis Bozize of the Central African Republic on August 24. Chissano then proceeded to Juba to consult with the Government of Southern Sudan mediator, Riek Machar. President Yoweri Museveni also met with Bozize on August 23 and reportedly received assurances that the LRA would not be allowed to use CAR territory for sanctuary.

13. (SBU) On August 27, Minister of Internal Affairs Ruhakana Rugunda announced that the GOU would be mobilizing 350 million USD for a reparations fund to help victims of the LRA. Funds were expected to come from donors. Rugunda said that the funds for the three-year project were aimed at the overall development of victims' communities. He emphasized that individuals would not receive payments.

14. (SBU) According to a survey entitled "New Population Based Data on Attitudes about Peace and Justice," northerners indicate that health (45.2 percent), peace (44.1 percent), livelihood concerns - land, food, money, and education remain their top priorities. The survey of eight northern Ugandan districts was conducted by the University of California Berkeley's Human Rights Center which interviewed 2,875 northerners in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Oyam, Lira, Soroti, and Amuria from April to June 2007. Other key findings include: only three percent of the respondents mentioned justice as a priority, but 70 percent said it was important to hold accountable those who committed human rights violations. A majority (76 percent) said that pursuing trials prior to the conclusion of the peace talks would endanger the peace process.

15. (SBU) During the Government of Uganda consultations in Gulu, Adjumani, Soroti and Lira, the desire for a truth commission was repeated many times. There was considerable support for the use of traditional mechanisms instead of formal justice. Northern residents in these districts stressed the importance of peace and reconciliation. Some residents favored punitive justice. A UNOCHA

observer described the meetings as highly successful, well-structured, and actively involving participants. The national consultations will continue until the end of September.

¶6. (SBU) Africa Bureau Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer traveled to Uganda from September 4-5 and met with President Museveni and northern leaders. She was accompanied by Tim Shortley, Senior Advisor for Conflict Resolution, who remained behind to meet with GOU negotiators, donors, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and military officials. He traveled to Juba to meet with GOSS mediators and UN officials.

¶7. (SBU) USG Activities: Senator Russell Feingold visited Uganda from August 26-30. Feingold met with President Museveni, Minister of Defense, Government negotiators, parliamentarians, local elected and religious leaders and internally displaced persons. During a visit to Onangko IDP camp, residents expressed a strong desire to return home. Discussions centered on security reform, particularly deployment of civilian police, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the LRA.

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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY
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¶8. (SBU) Local northern leaders continue in their rhetoric against "non-performing" non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Northern Uganda. During a dinner to celebrate the passing of the 2007/2008 budget, Gulu District Chairman Norbert Mao announced that he and the Vice Chairman of the Acholi Parliamentary Group, Reagan Okumu, would be opening "war" against poorly functioning NGOs. Mao asserted that NGOs target Gulu and other northern districts to raise funds. He argued that this insincerity leads to poor service for

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Ugandans. On August 24, Mao ousted the Spanish arm of Medecins San Frontiers from Gulu. He claimed that the organization provided the community of Omoro County, Gulu with outdated tuberculosis medication and unauthorized HIV/AIDS medication. WHO has investigated and found MSF to be providing treatment in line with national protocols.

¶9. (SBU) UNOCHA launched the 2008 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) August 21-22. United Nations agencies, international and national (NGOs), donors, Government of Uganda ministries and departments, and representatives from 12 districts in the Acholi, Lango, Teso and Karamoja sub-regions participated. Humanitarian and transition priorities for 2008 include:

- Education: support for the rehabilitation of schools, construction of staff quarters and return of displaced schools;
- Health: maintenance of health centers in camps. Increased staffing, rehabilitation of health units and construction of staff quarters and provision of health services in the parishes of return;
- Water and sanitation: distribution of sanitation kits, maintenance of facilities and hygiene promotion;
- Livelihoods: food aid in camps, especially for EVIs, camp rehabilitation as IDPs move out, phasing down food aid in transit camps and stepping up production, intensified livelihood diversification and expanded production;
- Protection: re-establishment of rule of law; disarmament and demobilization of local defense units (LDUs); DDR of "reporters";
- Community development: psychological interventions, strengthening of government structures, youth employment/skills development, combating environmental degradation.

¶10. (SBU) The New Vision newspaper reported that Rotary Club International will sponsor over 100 local doctors and doctors from India to treat victims of the LRA. The Indian doctors have also successfully treated patients in Tanzania, Lesotho, and Swaziland. The treatment will take place at seven hospitals in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Apac, Lira and Oyam districts. A conference entitled,

"Access to Surgical Service" followed on August 30.

¶11. (SBU) The reopening of the Coorom Primary School in Barlonyo, Lango District demonstrates the challenges ahead in return areas. The renewal of classes coincided with the influx of returning IDPs. However, Coorom like many other schools already lacks sufficient supplies, books, and teachers. Some argue that the reestablishment of such communities is premature, because GOU resources are stretched thin and can not meet the growing educational needs of returning IDPs.

¶12. (SBU) USG Activities: A U.S. Department of Labor funded program, KURET, continued to help war and HIV/AIDS affected children who are vulnerable to labor exploitation. On August 28, Marjorie Lagen, Project Manager, stated that KURET's current objective was to educate and train up to 8,100 children in the north. This would remove children from exploitative labor situations. KURET currently provides students with scholarships, health and psychological counseling, and training for teachers to manage trauma affected children.

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IN THE MEDIA AND THE WEB
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¶13. (U) Vincent Otti, the LRA's second-in-command, lashed out against the ICC during a recent telephone interview with the Daily Monitor. Otti declared that the ICC aims to squash opposition to bad governments. Moreover, he accused the ICC of a double standard because the court does not prosecute current presidents who participate in criminal activity. Otti argued that this quasi-immunity also applies to the former National Resistance Army (NRA), which brought Museveni to power, and UPDF commanders.

¶14. (U) A/S Frazer's visit to Uganda received extensive press coverage. A/S Frazer expressed U.S. support for the ongoing peace talks in Juba, but warned that the negotiations would not be open-ended. "Make peace quickly or we'll be coming after you, US tells Kony," headlined the Nairobi based "The East African." The same paper also said that "Marines will hunt down LRA rebels if talks fail." Walter Ochora, Gulu Resident District Commission, is quoted as saying "We did not push for that position in our meeting

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with Dr. Frazer... The U.S. government supports the peace talks, but they don't want endless talks." Ochora also noted that the Assistant Secretary had committed U.S. support for recovery in the north,

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saying that, "The government of the U.S. is going to support the resettlement programme fully. This programme is very expensive, it is going to cost about \$500 million, but she assured us that her government will support this programme substantially." The government-controlled "New Vision" newspaper led with the more restrained, "U.S. Wants Deadline for Talks."